



TO: Digvir Jayas  
President and Vice Chancellor

DATE: May 22, 2026

FROM: Lynn Kennedy  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

RE: Pre-Professional Engineering Transfer Program Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee approved the review of the Pre-Professional Engineering Transfer Program at its January 20, 2026 meeting.

The Self Study Committee for this review was comprised of: Saurya Das (Program Review Coordinator), Locke Spencer, and Chad Povey.

The review produced 5 documents:

1. Self Study Report. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received February 21, 2025.
2. External Review Report. Written by Adam Bourassa (University of Saskatchewan) and Zahra Moussavi (University of Manitoba) based on a site visit from September 22-23, 2025. Received October 3, 2025.
3. Program Response. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received December 17, 2025.
4. Dean's Response. Written by Matt Letts, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science. Received January 9, 2026.
5. Provost's Action plan. Written by Michelle Helstein, Provost and Vice President (Academic). Received March 12, 2026.

## Self Study Report

The report highlighted a number of program strengths including:

- Pursuing a career via the UL-ETP as the first year of study remains a viable entry point into the Engineering profession. Students enjoy many benefits including smaller class sizes and a positive community environment while receiving a rigorous course of study in a vibrant learning environment.
- Guaranteed Admission: Students who complete the first-year curriculum with a minimum GPA of 2.5 are assured entry into the second year of the engineering program at the University of Alberta.
- Tailored Curriculum: The program offers courses specifically designed to align with the University of Alberta's engineering curriculum, ensuring a seamless transition.
- Smaller Class Sizes: The University of Lethbridge provides a more intimate learning environment, allowing for personalized attention and closer interactions with faculty.
- Comprehensive Support Services: Students have access to co-operative education, international exchanges, and volunteer opportunities, enhancing their educational experience.

The report also noted some challenges experienced by the program:

- Limited Duration: The program covers only the first year of engineering studies, necessitating a transfer to another institution to complete the degree.
- Geographical Transition: Students must relocate to Edmonton to continue their studies at the University of Alberta after the first year, which may pose logistical challenges.

The report made several recommendations and asked for External Reviewer feedback on several areas including:

- Explore options to increase enrolment levels in this program (e.g., aim to double enrolment in the next few years).
  - Formally confirming agreement with UAlberta and understanding of increased capacity (at time of writing this is tentative).
  - Formalize agreement with UCalgary, UVic, explore feasibility of additional transfer agreements (e.g., USask).
  - Provide a mechanism for students who have taken (or are in progress of taking) a substantial portion of the UL-ETP courses to be granted status as UL-ETP students prior to the UAlberta transfer application deadlines.
  - For alternative transfer agreements, attempt to keep course requirements the same as much as possible such that students have multiple transfer options available to increase their chances of getting into their discipline of choice.
  - Enable the Physics and Astronomy Dept. to be more closely involved with recruitment efforts.
  - Allow the Physics and Astronomy Dept. /Program Coordinator some discretion regarding program admission offers for fringe cases.
- Review alignment of ULethbridge curriculum with UAlberta courses.
  - Periodic/ongoing review.
  - Explore ways to account for transfer destination curriculum differences within the ENGG courses to keep options open while remaining aligned with UAlberta (the primary transfer institution).
- Combine scheduling for ENGG 1100 and ENGG 1600 to allow for both courses to be spread over a full year.
- Follow through on the following continuing recommendations from the last review: reinstate the UL-ETP Committee.
- Consider ways to introduce more Python Programming to students (i.e., to more closely mirror the UAlberta curriculum).

- Have a dedicated cohort space on campus and a one-hour block in the fall semester where the program coordinator can provide more general supports.
- Foster an engineering student club on campus.
- More dedicated engineering programming (decide which courses to start). Decide carefully based on numbers and resource requirements. As available, allow these courses to be available to other majors based on interest
- Is the Engineering transfer program (UL-ETP) aligned with the University's strategic direction?
- Does the UL-ETP contribute to the educational needs of students in Southern Alberta?
- Does the UL-ETP assist the province in meeting its demand for engineering graduates?
- What courses would benefit from being specific to engineers? What courses are better left as common and taken with other students outside of engineering?
- How can we increase enrolment in the program while maintaining a high entrance standard?
- How can we better support our students and better prepare them for the transition to the remainder of their studies at a different institution?
- What supports are needed to increase numbers without compromising the advantages of the smaller class sizes and close-knit cohort culture of our program?
- If the institution is successful in creating a full 4-year engineering program how should the transfer program adapt to this development?
- How can we improve on keeping our institutional relationship with our students and better celebrate their successes?
- Should we actively pursue transfer agreements with other Canadian engineering schools? If so which ones?
- How can we better support students in their transition to other institutions (i.e., other than UAlberta)?
- How can we provide custom programming and learning within core areas taught to a broader student base?

## External Review Report

The External Review Report contained five (5) recommendations for improving the program:

- Conduct more systematic surveys: With limited opportunity to follow the academic and career paths of the transfer students beyond the first year, this is a key method to increase understanding of the benefits and limitations of the program. We recommend that the ETP develop more detailed questions and run surveys at program entrance, before the end of second semester, and then every year after, for as many years as students are responsive. Metrics could include stage of program/career, the discipline of choice; the reason for the choice, whether this was their first choice, the relationship between ETP course and UofA program, etc.
- Consider an increased GPA entrance threshold: Given the current dramatic rise in enrollment, the ETP should consider an entrance GPA requirement that aligns strategically with the current capacity and growth goals for the ETP.
- Formalize the UofA agreement: This is an obviously critical element of the success of the ETP. We recommend strongly that the university carefully develop a process to formalize the UofA transfer agreement and that the ETP formalize the monitoring process of any curriculum changes through yearly meetings with UofA Dean's office or similar.
- Make hiring of faculty with P.Eng. designation a priority: The current structure leans heavily on the P.Eng. designation of two P.Eng. faculty members, which puts a risk on the program in the case of losing one for unforeseen reasons. The university should strongly consider the asset of the P.Eng. designation and consider it in the hiring process of new faculty or instructors.

- Support the advisory and administrative aspects of the program: The ETP unsustainably depends on one faculty member for student advising, coordinator of ETP, and chair of the department, as well as handling many aspects of outreach. At minimum, some TA support should be assigned to these roles.

## Program Response

In their Program Response, the Self Study Committee addressed the recommendations from the External Review Report:

1. <i>Conduct more systematic surveys.</i>	As noted by the external reviewers, unlike traditional undergraduate and graduate programs, the Pre-Professional Engineering Transfer Program is unique in that students spend only their first year on the U of L campus. Therefore, as suggested by reviewers, conducting a systematic survey to gain insights into transfer students' academic and career paths beyond their first year at the U of L would offer further understanding of the advantages and limitations of the program. We will work with the Institutional Analysis office at U of L, develop a survey that includes various questions including the ones suggested by the external reviewers (e.g., stage of program/career, the discipline of choice, the reason for choosing specific discipline, whether this was their first choice, the relationship between Pre-Professional Engineering Transfer program courses at U of L and alignment with UofAlberta program, etc.). We will collaborate with the UofAlberta to conduct surveys and gather information as well.
2. <i>Consider an increased GPA entrance threshold.</i>	We admitted 100 students for Fall 2025 (non-competitive, first-come, first-served, based on our 75% in five required high school benchmark courses), and a handful of students were unable to join. As noted by the external reviewers, this allowed students with a 75% average in high school for five required courses to access the pathway into engineering, with smaller classes and strong faculty engagement. For Fall 2026, there are approximately 100 students registered in the program. Although we did not change the entrance requirements for high school students, we did raise the admission cut-off from 75% to 85% for the five required courses, and placed students scoring between 75% and 84.9% on a waiting list. This measure was temporary and taken for two reasons: first, to continue providing an accessible pathway to students with lower GPAs as permitted; and second, because the sharp increase in Fall 2026 admissions might be an anomaly, and circumstances could change in subsequent years. In summary, we have a mechanism to attract students with higher scores without permanently raising the admission requirements.
3. <i>Formalize the UofA agreement.</i>	We agree with the external reviewers' recommendation and are actively addressing it. Currently, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science is collaborating with the Department of Physics and Astronomy and the UofAlberta to finalize the Pre-Professional Engineering Transfer Program.
4. <i>Make hiring of faculty with P.Eng. designation a priority.</i>	We thank the reviewers for their valuable suggestion to prioritize hiring a future faculty member with the P.Eng. designation. The Department has already acted on this suggestion and, in a Position Request for the 2027-2028 academic year submitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science in November 2025, a position for an Experimental Physicist with a Ph.D. or an Engineer with a Ph.D. and P.Eng. has been requested.
5. <i>Support the advisory and administrative aspects of the program</i>	External reviewers indicated that the program depends on one faculty member for student advising, the coordinator of the program, for outreach activities, who is also the Chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy. With the addition of another faculty member with P.Eng. certification, who is teaching engineering courses and lab sections, along with another instructor from the department for this program, there is now teaching support available. However, the Department will work closely to reevaluate some of the teaching and service activities carried out by department members, as well as collaborate with the Dean's office to allocate appropriate resources and assign tasks, such as outreach, so that the Department Chair has the support needed to sustain the program.

## Dean's Response

This is a summary of the Dean of the Faculty of Art and Science's response to the above documents:

The Dean's Office thanks Dr. Zahra Moussavi (University of Manitoba) and Dr. Adam Bourassa (University of Saskatchewan) for excellent work on the Engineering Transfer review. The Dean's Office was pleased that they found that our program provides an excellent pathway for southern Alberta students into Engineering degrees, with the advantage of smaller class sizes, access to teaching staff. We are also pleased to know that they found that student satisfaction is high with the quality of teaching in the program. We agree with their recommendations. Specifically, the Dean's Office agrees to (i) enhance systematic surveying of student outcomes and program impact, (ii) ensure a GPA threshold that aligns with program capacity and ensures the continued high quality of the program, (iii) to formally renew and monitor the transfer agreement with the University of Alberta, (iv) to seek additional P.Eng. expertise among faculty members delivering the program and (v) find ways to provide sufficient advisory and administrative support that address this program's complex needs.

## Provost's Action Plan

Consulting the External Reviewer Recommendations, the Program Response, and Dean Matt Letts, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee made the following four (4) recommendations for action which the Program must report on in 1 and 3 years:

1. The Arts & Science Dean's office, in consultation with the Pre-Professional Engineering Transfer Program, will formalize the transfer agreement with the University of Alberta. This agreement should include a formal process for monitoring any curriculum changes through yearly meetings with the University of Alberta Dean's office.
2. The Pre-Professional Engineering Transfer Program should engage in discussions with the planning committee for the proposed 4-year Engineering program to identify shared resources, particularly the hiring of faculty members with a P. Eng designation in support of both programs (should the 4-year program be approved).
3. The Pre-Professional Engineering Transfer Program and the Arts & Science Dean's office should discuss with Institutional Analysis the feasibility of developing and implementing a standardized reoccurring survey framework to monitor student experience and the efficacy of the program.
4. The Pre-Professional Engineering Transfer Program, in consultation with the Arts & Science Dean's office, should document clearly defined roles and responsibilities for faculty members involved in the program to ensure continuity and shared responsibilities.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the Pre-Professional Engineering Transfer Program academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately, and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lynn Kennedy  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee  
Associate Professor, Department of History and Religion

cc Michelle Helstein, PhD.  
Provost & Vice-President (Academic)